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## BOOK NOTICES

**Extra-biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History.** Translated and edited by S. A. B. Mercer. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913. Pp. xvi+210. \$1.50.

This book possesses one advantage over all other collections of a similar sort, in that it presents the more important inscriptions and documents from every field that bear upon the Bible. It thus includes Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Moabite, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin sources. The idea of bringing them all together into one small volume and furnishing them with brief introductory notes explaining their general bearing is a good one and worthy of encouragement.

The author tells us that he has made practically all these translations anew for himself. But we do not expect to find any significant improvement of rendering or enrichment of knowledge in the book when we read in the preface that this great task of canvassing all the important Babylonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian inscriptions, to say nothing of the rest, and rendering them into English afresh, was taken up only two years ago. A scientific translation of all these materials would be the work of a lifetime. As a matter of fact, many words and passages in the inscriptions presented are of very doubtful meaning; but Dr. Mercer satisfies himself with repeating the renderings of his predecessors. He goes beyond them in such cases only by failing to reproduce their warnings in the way of question marks and footnotes, which call attention to the uncertainty of their renderings. The unsophisticated reader for whom this book is intended would never suspect the real state of the case.

The date of Hammurabi is to be placed at 2123-2081 B.C., rather than at 2130 or 1958 B.C. (p. 7) or 2000 B.C. (p. 193). The legend on the Black Obelisk describes Jehu as "Son of Omri" not "of the land of Omri." This legend is above the relief, as stated on p. xviii, and not beneath it, as stated on p. 33. The Dog River runs into the sea about six or seven miles to the northeast of Beirut and not "through Beirut" (p. 23). "Hamah" (p. 41) is a misprint for "Hamath." On p. 44, "Khumria" should be changed to "Omri" as is done everywhere else where the name occurs. The identification of "Eri-aku king of Larsa" with Arioch king of Ellasar (Gen., chap. 14) is not sustained "by the most competent scholars" (p. 5), but rather seriously doubted by them. The reading "Bir-idri" and its identification with Ben-hadad I is adhered to apparently without any suspicion that it has been shown to be practically impossible. The rendering "Bir'idri

forsook his land" (p. 32) is inconsistent with the biblical statement, which is accepted on p. 25, that Hazael murdered his predecessor. It has long been recognized that this phrase, of common occurrence, denotes not flight, but death.

A second siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib is posited on p. 47, but there is no really satisfactory evidence of such a siege. The three names "Melucha," "Melukha," and "Melukh-kha" on pp. 45, 48, and 55 are one and the same and should be spelled alike to save confusion in the reader's mind. On p. 61, quotation marks should accompany the first sentence.

Notwithstanding many such shortcomings as these, Dr. Mercer's book, because of the wide range of its materials and their being here so ready of access, and because of the large number of chronological and dynastic tables which it includes, will be found a very convenient work for ready reference on the part of the student of history. It is so useful a book that we can but wish it were a better one.

**The Song of Songs, Edited as a Dramatic Poem, with Introduction, Revised Translation and Excursuses.** By W. W. Cannon. Cambridge: University Press, 1913. Pp. viii+158. 7s. 6d.

Much discussion has gone on in recent years regarding the nature of the Song of Songs. Is it a carefully wrought-out drama; or a series of songs sung at Hebrew weddings; or a mere collection of loosely related love-songs? Mr. Cannon defends stoutly the dramatic interpretation, treating the book, however, not as a genuine drama intended for representation upon the stage, but rather as a dramatic poem intended more for scenic use. This is the most competent treatment of this view available in English. The presentation is accompanied by a keen criticism of rival views which is well worth consideration. The translation follows the Authorized Version as nearly as loyalty to the Hebrew permits. The author's textual criticism is cautious, perhaps overmuch. The text is printed with accompanying analyses and headings which enable the reader to see at a glance just what Mr. Cannon conceives the original structure and significance to have been. Footnotes accompanying the translation support it with textual and critical data. The excursions at the end are devoted to: (1) the LXX text of the Song; (2) conjectural emendation of the Massoretic text; (3) the language of the Song; and (4) quotations from the Song in other books. Far the greater part of the volume is given up to the introduction which treats

every problem of a general character with the requisite fulness. The book is so written as to be valuable to the lay student for whom it is primarily intended, and also useful to the specialist who will find here either strong support for his own view or an attack upon it with which he must reckon.

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**The Theory of Social Revolutions.** By Brooks Adams. New York: Macmillan, 1913. Pp. vii+240. \$1.25.

A decidedly pessimistic study, this book draws a great deal of power and significance from its appeal to a large and varied assortment of historical facts which, *per se*, nobody can gainsay. We do not agree to the partly expressed and partly implied conclusion with which Mr. Adams brings his volume to a close, namely, that America is on the eve of a drastic revolutionary settlement of the social problem which is to follow in "the infinitely extended line of impressive precedents" (p. 229). Nevertheless, we think the book is well worth attention and study. Mr. Adams is a lawyer; and his treatment of the social problem loses no force through its formulation in terms which are, to a large degree, legal. His preoccupation with jurisprudence, however, leads him to overlook certain moral aspects of history which qualify his argument and his conclusions.

His theory, in brief, is that society is a mechanism which naturally proceeds through cataclysms of adjustment to the demands generated by successive periods of evolution. As each crisis approaches, the class which is actually in power fails to recognize that the environment has changed, and so it opposes the inevitable, with the result that a new class forcibly displaces it and rises to the top. "A ruling class," writes Mr. Adams, "is seldom conscious of its own decay, and most of the worst catastrophes of history have been caused by an obstinate resistance to change when resistance was no longer possible" (p. 133). In working up to the climax of his argument, he dwells with much vividness upon the French Revolution (pp. 137-202), emphasizing that the critical moment arrived when the Parliament of Paris, representing the ancient régime, declined to register the decree of tax reform written in the name of the king by Turgot, the bourgeois minister of finance. The nobility failed to perceive that the fulness of time had come; and so they lost their estates and their heads.

In spite of his attractive style, Mr. Adams' underlying hypothesis is purely mechanical; and his estimate of the situation today is thereby vitiated. He is unduly impressed by the resemblances between revolutionary France and contemporary America, and not sufficiently influenced by the differences. The French

peasantry and *bourgeoisie* were driven mad by the fact that France had no constitution through which the newer social forces could operate. America has a legal, constitutional outlet for her social awakening; and, besides, we possess a fund of conservative moral and religious force generated by our schools and churches, the like of which was absolutely non-existent in eighteenth-century France. But over and above these considerations, Mr. Adams' argument is marred by a glaring inconsistency which, of itself, is enough to falsify his conclusion. In his opening chapter, entitled "The Collapse of Capitalistic Government," he demonstrates, what every good observer knows, that the reign of unchecked capitalism in America is over. But in the concluding chapter, we find him speculating about the consequences destined to flow from the resistance of short-sighted capitalism to reform, as if our situation repeated that of France on the eve of the Revolution. Since the appearance of Mr. Adams' earlier book, *Civilization and Decay*, we have felt that he is a well informed and brilliant writer, whose judgment is not commensurate with his knowledge; and this impression is unchanged by the volume before us.

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**Old Testament Legends; Being Stories Out of Some of the Less-known Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament.** By Mr. R. James. With 10 Illustrations by H. J. Ford. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913. Pp. xxv+157. \$1.25.

This is a book for the boys and girls. It presents eight stories, chosen for their power to interest youth and for the sound sense that some of them, at least, inculcate either directly or indirectly. The translations are in some cases made by the author; in others, they are taken from standard editions of the various apocryphal books. A cleverly conceived preface furnishes the necessary viewpoint for the understanding of the stories. The collection is well fitted to arouse an interest in the Apocrypha and a desire for further knowledge of them.

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**Shall We Do without Jesus?** By Arthur C. Hill. New York: Doran & Co., 1913. Pp. xii+304. \$1.50.

The author proceeds along a line of treatment which he conceives to be more effective than that of a merely technical defense of Christian doctrine. He opposes to the negative tendencies of our time a sane and healthful message at all points where doubt or sin or agnosticism grips the present age. He admits that the church of today faces a difficult situa-